

Preadolescence

Ages 9-12: Upper Elementary School

- Puberty (becoming sexually mature) usually starts at the age of 10 for girls and 11 for boys, but it can occur earlier or later for both.
- There are many physical, mental and emotional changes during this time for your child.
- Children worry about whether their body is developing normally. Reassure them that they are normal & everyone is different.
- Children at this age need to know the facts about menstruation, wet dreams, and other changes of their body.
- They are ready to know more about how babies are conceived and born.
- They need to know that sexual feelings are normal & natural, and that having feelings does not mean you have to act on them.
- They need to know that sexual intercourse has consequences, that it is adult behavior and it is not for young people.
- They need to know how sexually transmitted diseases (STD's) and HIV are transmitted and how they can be prevented, including the use of abstinence and the use of condoms.
- Males and females should be educated about each other: during puberty girls begin to ovulate & menstruate, and boys begin to produce sperm & ejaculate.
- Children get more curious about their sexuality as they become older.
- As a parent, be aware of the many influences in their life and keep the lines of communication open.
- Reinforce your own values and encourage your children to talk to you.

